

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 196624

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV, IT, US

SUBJECT: EXPLOSION OF LETHAL GAS IN LOMBARDY

REF: ROME 12673

1. DEPT AUGUST 5 HELD LENGTHY AND INTERESTING DEBRIEFING WITH DR. KEARNEY, ATTENDED BY REPS FROM EPA, NIH, CEQ, AID, NIEHS, AND NAS. ALL WERE IMPRESSED WITH KEARNEY'S PRESENTATION. DEPTOFFS WERE ESPECIALLY APPRECIATIVE OF KEARNEY SENSITIVITY TO POLITICAL ASPECTS OF PROBLEM.

2. DEPT CONCURS IN KEARNEY'S RECOMMENDATION THAT HIS TEN-POINT PROGRAM OF DECONTAMINATION NOT BEAR US STAMP OF ORIGIN BUT BE PERCEIVED AS GOI PLAN.

3. DEPT AND OTHER CONCERNED AGENCIES HAVE HAD CONSTANT STREAM OF CALLERS REPRESENTING VARIOUS MEDICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISCIPLINES WISHING TO OFFER THEIR SERVICES TO ITALIAN AUTHORITIES. KEARNEY REPORTS THAT MINISTRY
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OF HEALTH SIMILARLY BOMBARDED.

4. DEPT IS NOT RPT NOT INTERESTED IN THRUSTING UNWANTED ADVISERS, SOME OF WHOM ARE LESS THAN DISINTERESTED, UPON THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES. WE WANT TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS

WHICH POINT TO OR IMPLY US CONNECTION WITH OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ICMESA ACCIDENT. NOR DO WE WISH TO ROB GOI OF ANY CREDIT DUE OR MAKE ITALIANS APPEAR LESS THAN ABLE TO COPE. WE ASSUME DAL FALCO SHARES THESE CONCERNS.

5. CONSENSUS OF EXPERTS DEBRIEFING KEARNEY WAS THAT ITALIANS ARE COPING REASONABLY WELL ON ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS AND THAT IF THEY MOVE PROMPTLY TO IMPLEMENT PLAN SUGGESTED BY KEARNEY, GOI WILL BE WELL ON THE ROAD TO SOLVING CONTAMINATION PROBLEM. SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS (PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH MEDICAL BACKGROUND) NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT ITALIANS MAY BE MISSING IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY PRECISE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ESPECIALLY MEDICAL EFFECTS ACCOMPANYING TCDD ACCIDENT. EVENT IN SEVESO PRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND LIMITED KNOWLEDGE NOW PRESENTLY AVAILABLE AND COULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP IMPROVED RESPONSE TO SUCH CASES IN THE FUTURE.

6. QUESTION WAS RAISED WHETHER US MIGHT NOT SUGGEST TO THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT THAT IT CONSIDER APPROVING A TEAM MADE UP PRIMARILY OF MEDICAL RESEARCHERS TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF TCDD IN AFFECTED AREAS. THE TEAM WOULD NOT REPLACE ITALIAN PHYSICIANS NOR OFFER UNSOLICITED ADVICE ON TREATMENT METHODS. ITS PURPOSE WOULD BE SOLELY TO CONDUCT RESEARCH. DEPT BELIEVES IDEA HAS MERIT, BUT WOULD PREFER THAT ANY GROUP BE COMPOSED OF MEMBERS OF SEVERAL COUNTRIES WITH NO MORE THAN ONE OR TWO FROM THE US.

7. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT ITALIANS WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SUCH A PROPOSAL. IF SO, EMBASSY MAY BROACH SUBJECT ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS WITH DAL FALCO, DRAWING ON POINTS MADE ABOVE.

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8. FYI: JUST AS WE DO NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE CONNECTED WITH DIOXINE ACCIDENT, NEITHER DO WE WISH TO EXPLOIT IT, E.G., BY PROVIDING GHOULISH GRIST FOR ITALIAN PRESS. LOW-PROFILE RESEARCH GROUP NEED NOT BE CAUSE FOR SUCH TO HAPPEN, BUT WE ARE SENSITIVE TO THIS ASPECT AS WELL. HABIB

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